

**SUZANNE BRUCE & ASSOCIATES, P.A.**

**NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES**

**THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW HEALTH INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION**

**PLEASE REVIEW CAREFULLY  
THE PRIVACY OF YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION IS IMPORTANT TO US**

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**OUR LEGAL DUTY**

We are required by applicable federal and state law to maintain the privacy of your health information. We are also required to give you this Notice about our privacy practices, our legal duties, and your rights concerning your health information. We must follow the privacy practices that are described in this Notice while it is in effect. This Notice takes effect 4/14/03, and will remain in effect until we replace it.

We reserve the right to change our privacy practices and the terms of this Notice at any time, provided such changes are permitted by the applicable law. We reserve the right to make the changes in our privacy practices and the new terms of our Notice effective for all health information that we maintain, including health information we created or received before we make the changes. Before we make significant changes in our privacy practices, we will change this Notice and make the new Notice available upon request.

You may request a copy of our Notice at any time. For more information about our privacy practices, or for additional copies of this Notice, please contact us using the information listed at the end of this Notice.

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**USES AND DISCLOSURES OF HEALTH INFORMATION**

We use and disclose health information about you for treatment, payment and healthcare operations. For example:

**Treatment:** We may use or disclose your health information to a physician or other healthcare provider providing treatment to you.

**Payment:** We may use and disclose your health information to obtain payment for services we provide to you.

**Healthcare Operations:** We may use and disclose your health information in connection with our healthcare operations. Healthcare operations include quality assessment and improvement activities, reviewing the competence or qualifications of healthcare professionals, evaluating practitioner or provider performance, conducting training programs, accreditation, and certification, licensing, or credentialing activities.

**Your Authorization:** In addition to our use of your health information for treatment, payment or healthcare operations, you may give us written authorization to use your health information or to disclose it to anyone for any purpose. If you give us authorization, you may revoke it in writing at any time. Your revocation will not affect any use or disclosure performed by your authorization while it was in effect. Unless you give us written authorization, we cannot use or discuss your health information for any reason except those described in this Notice.

**To Your Family and Friends:** With your authorization we can disclose your health information to a family member, friend or other person to the extent necessary to help with your healthcare or with payment for your healthcare.

**Persons Involved in Care:** We may use or disclose health information to notify, or assist in the notification of (including identifying and locating) a family member, your personal representative or another person responsible for your care, of your location, your general condition, or death. If you are present, then prior to use or disclosure of your health information, we will provide you with an opportunity to object to such uses or disclosures. In the event of your incapacity or emergency circumstances, we will disclose health information based on a determination using our professional judgment disclosing only health information that is directly relevant to the person's involvement in your healthcare. We will also use our professional judgment and our experience with common practice to make reasonable inferences of your best interest in allowing a person to pick up filled prescriptions, medical supplies or other similar forms of health information.

**Required by Law:** We may use or disclose your health information when we are required to do so by law.

**Abuse or Neglect:** We may disclose your health information to appropriate authorities if we reasonably believe that you are a possible victim of abuse, neglect, or domestic violence or the possible victim of other crimes. We may disclose your health information to the extent necessary to avert a serious threat to your health or safety or the health or safety of others.

**National Security:** We may disclose to military authorities the health information of Armed Forces personnel under certain circumstances. We may disclose to authorized federal officials health information required for lawful intelligence, counterintelligence, and other national security activities. We may disclose to correctional institutions or law enforcement officials having custody of protected health information of an inmate or patient under certain circumstances.

**Appointment Reminders:** We may use or disclose your health information to provide you with appointment reminders such as voicemail message, postcards, or letters.

**Marketing:** We may use your name email address and/ or mailing address in order to send you a copy of our quarterly newsletter called "The Skinny" and our monthly electronic newsletters, the "Skin\_e\_Letter" and the "Spa\_e\_Letter." These newsletters contain information about upcoming seminars, new and improved treatment options, specials, as well as general medical and cosmetic dermatology information for our patients. We may use your name, email address and/ or mailing address in order to inform you of clinical studies in which we are enrolling in the Center for Skin Research.

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## **PATIENT RIGHTS**

**Access:** You have the right to inspect and obtain a copy of your health information, with limited exceptions. You must make a request in writing to obtain access to your healthcare information. You may obtain a form to request access by using the contact information listed at the end of this Notice.

**Disclosure Accounting:** You have the right to receive a list of instances in which our business associates disclosed your health information for purposes, other than treatment, payment, healthcare operations and certain other activities, for the last 6 years, but not before April 14, 2003. If you request this accounting more than once in a 12-month period, we may charge you a reasonable, cost-based fee for responding to these additional requests. Our practice will notify you of the costs involved with additional requests, and you may withdraw your request before you incur any costs.

**Restriction:** You have the right to request that we place additional restrictions on our use of disclosure of your health information. We are not required to agree to these additional restrictions, but if we do, we will abide by our agreement, except in emergency situations. You may obtain a form to request restricted disclosure by using the contact information listed at the end of this Notice.

**Alternative Communication:** You have the right to request that we communicate with you about your health information by alternative means or to an alternative location. You must make your request in writing. Your request must specify the alternative means or location and provide satisfactory explanation how payments will be handled under the alternative means or location you request.

**Amendments:** You have the right to request that we amend your health information. Your request must be in writing and it must explain why the information should be amended. We may deny your request under certain circumstances.

**Electronic Notice:** If you receive this Notice on our web site or by electronic mail (e-mail), you are entitled to receive this Notice in written format.

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## **QUESTIONS AND COMPLAINTS**

If you want more information about our privacy practices or have questions or concerns please contact us.

If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint with our practice or with the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. To file a complaint with our practice please contact Kelly Goodman, Director of Operations, 713 796 9199. All complaints must be submitted in writing.